



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HB 2240

national guard members; tuition waivers

Sponsor: Representative Cardenas

DPA	Committee on Military Affairs and Public Safety
W/D	Committee on Appropriations
DPA	Caucus and COW
X	House Engrossed

OVERVIEW

HB 2240 establishes a tuition waiver program for members of the Arizona National Guard.

HISTORY

The Arizona National Guard is part of the reserve component of the U.S. Army and Air Force and responds to state and national emergencies. The Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA) is primarily responsible for managing and operating the Arizona National Guard. The National Guard Postsecondary Education Reimbursement Program is administered by DEMA and allows a qualified member of the Arizona National Guard to apply for tuition and fees reimbursement for a semester of undergraduate or graduate coursework at a public or private university or a vocational school in Arizona. A member must meet the following qualifications to be eligible to apply for reimbursement:

- is a member of the Arizona Army or Air National Guard throughout the semester;
- has completed initial active duty service;
- has satisfactorily performed duty upon return from initial active duty training;
- maintains at least a “C” average each semester; and
- is ineligible for benefits under the Veterans’ Readjustment Benefits Act of 1966.

Funding for the National Guard Postsecondary Education Reimbursement Program is subject to Legislative appropriation and reimbursement monies may not be allocated in excess of amounts appropriated by the Legislature.

PROVISIONS

1. Repeals the National Guard Postsecondary Education Reimbursement Program.
2. Allows a qualifying National Guard member to attend any Arizona public institution of higher learning (IHL) towards completion of a bachelor or master’s degree tuition-free for up to 16 credits per semester, with a maximum of 120 credits allowed for a bachelor’s degree and 33 credits allowed for a master’s degree.
3. States that a National Guard member must meet the following qualifications to be eligible to receive free tuition:
 - a. has completed initial active duty training and is in good standing as an active member of the Arizona Army or Air National Guard;
 - b. is accepted to and has enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student in good standing at an Arizona public IHL;

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- c. has applied for and is eligible to receive tuition benefits via the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or Department of Defense;
 - d. is an Arizona resident, enlisted in the U.S. Armed Forces in Arizona, or designated Arizona as the member's home of record when beginning active duty status;
 - e. is not eligible for full Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment or Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits; and
 - f. is in compliance with the Arizona public IHL's GPA and excessive credit hour requirements for the member's designated program of study.
4. Stipulates that a National Guard member who is deployed to active duty service while enrolled at an Arizona public IHL may continue to receive tuition benefits after discharge from service under conditions other than dishonorable.
5. Specifies when tuition benefit eligibility begins and ends for National Guard members whose enrollment at an Arizona public IHL is interrupted by deployment to active duty service:
 - a. National Guard members who are discharged for nonmedical reasons or for medical reasons not caused by illness or injury while performing duties may continue to receive tuition benefits from the time of discharge until the greater of one semester or the length of deployment.
 - b. National Guard members who are discharged or retired for medical reasons caused by illness or injury incurred while on federal orders and deployed overseas, terrorist action, or a natural disaster may continue to receive tuition benefits from the time of discharge or retirement until the earlier of completion of the degree program or five years.
6. Requires a National Guard member to pay the tuition for any failed coursework.
7. Stipulates that a National Guard member may only enroll in a course tuition-free if the course has open seats after registration closes.